

**Minutes of the Tree and Landscape Board
City Hall, City of College Park
August 17, 2016**

<u>Term Exp.</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
N/A	Brenda Alexander, Public Works Deputy Director	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N/A	Steven Beavers, Planning Dept. Representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11/30/2016	John Krouse, Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/30/17	John Lea-Cox, City Forester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8/30/2017	Christine O'Brien, member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N/A	Janis Oppelt/CBE Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9/30/2016	Joseph Smith, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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N/A	Laura Salers, Contract Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

- 1. Approval of Meeting Minutes:** The minutes of the July 20, 2016 meeting were reviewed and several edits were made.

Motion: To adopt the TLB meeting minutes with changes.

Moved: Dr. Lea-Cox

Second: Mr. Krouse

Aye: Unanimous

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

- 2. Planning Department Report:** Mr. Beavers reported that Randolph Macon Road is under construction and curbs and gutters are going in. The road should be paved soon and will be renamed Howard Avenue. The Duval Field construction area has been fenced off and the contractor has begun work. Park and Planning will be holding a public hearing on the Resource Conservation Functional Master Plan on September 27th, 7:00 pm at the county administration building. The plan deals with forest canopy, water quality, urban agriculture, green infrastructure and agricultural conservation.

The TLB requested a \$1,000 match for the tree canopy enhancement program from the Committee for a Better Environment (CBE). The CBE was happy to provide the matching funds and encourages the TLB to seek additional funds from other entities so that the program can be an even greater success.

- 3. Public Works Department Report:** Ms. Alexander shared the following highlights:
 - EX-CEL Tree Experts are working to finish tree work in the city by the end of August.
 - Submitted a grant application to DNR to support replacing the play structure at Davis playground.

- Pepco has begun working on line clearance activities in North College Park. Two additional plans were received from Pepco and are being reviewed by Public Works.
- One of the part-time summer crew members has left to return to college.
- The fall pansy and bulbs were ordered. A list of replacement trees is being compiled.
- The MDE application for the compost facility is moving along and they will be making an onsite visit soon.
- Public Works has ordered port-a-johns for use at Duval Field because the fields will remain open to the public during the renovation project.

The TLB discussed using Alice Kennington Memorial Tree funds to enhance the Duval Field project.

Motion: That \$5,000 from the Alice Kennington Memorial Tree fund be devoted to covering the cost of trees and restore funding of the structural soil component at the Duval Field block house renovation project.

Moved: Dr. Lea-Cox

Second: Mr. Krouse

Aye: Unanimous

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

- 4. Pepco Tree Trimming Work and Council Agenda Item:** There are not significant updates on the Pepco work except the two new plans currently under review by Public Works.

A dead tree on 49th Avenue was discussed. Although the tree was enclosed in the property owner's fence, it may have partially been on the City right of way. The end result was that Pepco removed the tree.

5. Council Agenda Item

The Council Agenda item is a citizen's request to remove trees on Wichita Avenue. The item did not come to a vote at the last City Council meeting and so it will be on the agenda at the September 6th meeting. Dr. Lea-Cox noted that he will not be able to attend the September 6 meeting. A resident has requested that 3 Zelkova trees be removed from the right of way on Wichita Avenue near his home. Ms. Alexander shared photographs of the trees on Wichita with the Board members. Highlights of the discussion include:

- The TLB discussed the resident's possible reasons for the tree removal. These include noise from the birds singing, blocking of street light, roots raising the sidewalks and bird droppings.
- The trees are not directly in front of the requestor's house but he parks his cars under them.
- It was suggested that a possible solution to the lighting problem is to add a street light on that side of the street. The trees were thinned in the past to help alleviate this problem but have filled back in.
- The resident has complained numerous times about the birds that sit in the trees. Ms. Alexander reported visiting the trees several times and has not witnessed excessive birds in the trees during the day.
- At one point, the City placed shiny ornaments into the trees to deter the birds. The trees has since grown so much that they are no longer sufficient.

- The Wichita Avenue Zelkova trees are the only ones in the city that have been reported as having an excessive bird problem.
- The resident's cars are not moved on a regular basis because you can see leaves and debris accumulated behind the tires.
- Ms. Alexander talked to two additional residents living near the trees. One neighbor feels that the trees are getting into her sewer line but she has not reported this to WSSC. A second neighbor complained that she couldn't get to her ride because there were cars parked in front of her house and it was too difficult to get by them through the grass because of the tree roots sticking up. She declined Ms. Alexander's suggestion to request a handicap parking space in front of her house because her neighbor uses those spaces to park his cars.
- The City Code was reviewed and it states that the TLB's duty is to promote healthy trees with aesthetic, historic or ecological value.
- The resident can explore options such as parking elsewhere on the street and covering his cars.
- A representative from DNR advised Ms. Alexander that a resident cannot request trees cut down when they are in front of someone else's house.
- One member asked the TLB to consider the fact that the City owns these trees, and if they are creating a nuisance, they can be replaced with a tree that would be less likely to result in the same problems. Several TLB members felt that this would set a bad precedent.
- If the residents' primary concern is the bird droppings, then this is a wildlife management problem, not a tree problem and the City can look into ways to deter the birds.
- Mr. Krouse has a minority opinion on this matter. He doesn't want to see any further escalation of the situation. He feels that these trees and birds have proven to be a nuisance for the resident as well as the City staff dealing with it over a long period of time.

Motion: To send the City Council a position statement from the TLB in support of preserving these trees for the reasons discussed, including to not set a precedent of removing healthy trees and to maintain the ecological value of the trees.

Moved: Mr. Smith

Second: Ms. O'Brien

Discussion:

Mr. Krouse appreciates the position of the TLB, but he respectfully declines to support the motion because he feels that the City also has a responsibility to consider removal of trees that have proven to become a nuisance.

Aye: 5

Nay: 1

Abstain: 0

6. Tree Canopy Enhancement Program Policy: Ms. Alexander passed around a copy of the guidelines for the Tree Canopy Enhancement Program for review. Suggested edits include:

- If the application is denied, the application fee will be returned to the resident.
- Underground utilities will be marked by Ms. Utility prior to installation. (This will most likely be done by the installers)
- Release of Liability statement
- Ask contractor to provide tree maintenance information to the homeowner.

- Add section to the application asking the applicant to identify themselves as the owner or tenant. If the applicant is a tenant, their application would require an approval letter from the owner.
- If a resident wants a tree that is not on the recommended tree list, it will be considered on a case by case basis.

Ms. Alexander will finalize the document and pass it along to the City Manager and the legal department before moving it forward to City Council for approval.

- 7. Hazardous Trees Policy:** Public Services office did not submit comments on this matter. Ms. Alexander will follow up with them and this subject will be revisited at the September meeting.
- 8. Website Update:** Mr. Smith sent the documents the text for the website to Ms. Alexander. It is ready to be uploaded. The list of TLB members will be updated.
- 9. Native Plant Finder:** Dr. Lea-Cox shared information regarding a native plant finder database, which will help people find the best native plants specifically for their area that attract butterflies and moths and the birds that feed on their caterpillars, based upon the research of Dr. Douglas Tallamy. This resource will help people make planting decisions that support diversity and promote insects, which will allow wildlife to thrive. The TLB will consider creating a brochure that recommends plantings and cross reference it with the ecological benefits of each variety so that residents have a better understanding of what they can plant to attract butterflies and birds.
- 10. Benefits of Large Trees Brochure:** This topic will be revisited at the September meeting.
- 11. Wrap Up, Confirmation of Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the TLB will take place on September 21, 2016. Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Lea-Cox and seconded by Mr. Krouse. Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:46 pm.